



## SOCIAL SECURITY REQUESTS: DO'S AND DON'T'S

Over 98% of Massachusetts births request social security numbers using SSA's enumeration-at-birth program. This system requests a social security card for all newborns via the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and Statistics. RVRS sends requests daily to SSA. Parents of the newborn usually receive social security cards within one month of birth. If the card is not received within this time, please have parents call the Registry at (617) 740-2624.

There are times when a social security card should not be requested for a newborn.

### "NO SOCIAL SECURITY REQUEST" GUIDELINES

If the legal portion of the record is incomplete for any reason:

- If the mother's maiden name is missing...
- If legal forms are pending... (Acknowledgments or Affidavits)...
- If the record is unsigned...  
OR
- If the newborn is not given a first name...
- If the parent residence is not in the United States...
- If the birth occurred in a prior calendar year...
- If there is a number in the generational (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>).
- If the newborn is to be adopted...
- If the newborn is transferred or is seriously ill...

If the newborn situation changes, a SSA request may be changed to "YES" on screen 3 of EBC at any time within the calendar year. The request will then be forwarded to SSA.

### Registry Technical and Legal Support

Registry of Vital Records and Statistics  
150 Mt.Vernon St., 1<sup>st</sup> FL  
Dorchester, MA 02125-3105

Hospital Support (617) 740-2605  
Nativity Unit FAX (617) 740-2713

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Internet Sites

<http://www.mass.gov/dph>

<http://www.mass.gov/dph/bhsre/rvr/rvr.htm>

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/>

Department of Public Health  
Registry of Vital Records  
Massachusetts General Law

### To Order

#### Registry Forms

### Telephone:

(617)740-2637

FAX: (617)740-2712

### Email

[pedro.fidalgo@state.ma.us](mailto:pedro.fidalgo@state.ma.us)

### Data downloads

Haile G (617) 740-2644

### Staff Support

### Telephone

Pauline McNulty (617)740-2623

Paul Budrow (617)740-2681

Karin Barrett (617)740-2621

Jane Purtill (617)740-2625

Genesis Systems (717)909-8500

Haile Gebreegziabher

### Email

[pauline.mcnulty@state.ma.us](mailto:pauline.mcnulty@state.ma.us)

[paul.budrow@state.ma.us](mailto:paul.budrow@state.ma.us)

[karin.barrett@state.ma.us](mailto:karin.barrett@state.ma.us)

[jane.purtill@state.ma.us](mailto:jane.purtill@state.ma.us)

(24 hr/7 day a week pager)

### Legal Registration Support

June Deloney (617)740-2665

Vital Regulation Email legal support

[june.deloney@state.ma.us](mailto:june.deloney@state.ma.us)

[vital.regulation@state.ma.us](mailto:vital.regulation@state.ma.us)

### Social Security Inquiries/Fetal Death Issues/Stillbirth Certificate

Annie B. Hobbs (617)740-2624

[annie.hobbs@state.ma.us](mailto:annie.hobbs@state.ma.us)



Information  
Booth

## BIRTH YEAR VALIDATION: EBC WARNING MESSAGE 365 DAY LIMIT

Have you ever received this message in EBC? If you do, please say "NO".



It occurs rarely, but this message is a warning to prevent a prior year error on a birth certificate. Birth records must be recorded within 365 days from the date of birth. Anything over 365 days becomes a *Delayed Record of Birth* which are never entered into EBC. Delayed records are created by the City/Town Clerk with assistance from the hospital facility, usually in the form of a letter requested by the Clerk that states the facts of the birth.

**BIRTH CERTIFICATE  
REGISTRATION  
HOSPITAL  
↓  
CITY/TOWN CLERK**

In most cases, birth certificates are created in the hospital facility and are sent to the municipal clerk's office for legal registration.<sup>1</sup>

After the records are checked for accuracy and

completeness, the City/Town Clerk accepts the record for registration by assigning a registered number, a date of record, and finally, the Clerk's signature. Any additional documents filed with the birth certificate, for example, the *Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage*, the *Affidavit of NonPaternity* or court orders, are also examined and accepted as part of the *Standard Certificate of Live Birth*.



Before legal registration, the *Standard Certificate of Live Birth* travels a very narrow path. It is sent from the hospital facility to the Town/City Clerk's office only. The birth certificate should never be sent to any other location for any reason. Parents must complete the birth certificate either at the hospital or at the City/Town Clerk's office.

The Registry recommends that "in transit" unregistered birth records be carefully directed to the Clerk's office for a number of reasons:

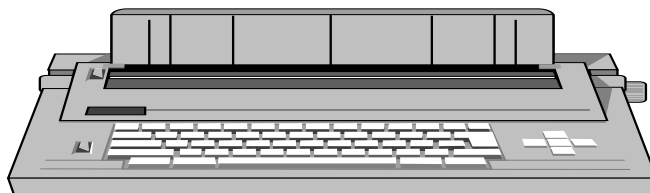
- Possible creation of fraudulent records.
- Compromised print quality, erasures or strikeouts.
- Loss of a record resulting in a Delayed Record of Birth.
- Confusion about the legal status of the record.
- Parent retention of an unrecorded record.

Occasionally, the documents accompanying the birth record may travel a broader path. The *Voluntary*



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE KEYBOARD:  
THE STANDARD FOR  
BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

Occasionally, the Registry receives requests from parents to use special characters from foreign languages to record their newborn's name. Examples of these characters are accent grave, accent acute, cedilla, umlaut, tilde and



circumflex. In some cases, requests have been made to use script from Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and the Khmer character set.

For the last fifteen years, the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and Statistics has maintained a policy of using the English language computer keyboard as a standard for all birth certificate information.

The reason for the policy is that current birth certificate information is stored electronically. Most Massachusetts birthing facilities use a software package, the Electronic Birth Certificate (EBC), to collect and store birth information and to print the *Standard Certificate of Live Birth*. All Massachusetts birth records are entered into this system and are printed using English language characters. Certified copies obtained from the Registry are also printed using this same criterion.

This language standard is applied uniformly across all vital documents. To accommodate special characters in non-English languages would compromise the Registry's ability to accurately record and maintain names in an electronic environment.

**BIRTH CERTIFICATE REGISTRATION  
HOSPITAL  
↓**

**CITY/TOWN CLERK (Continued)**

*Acknowledgment of Parentage* or the *Affidavit of NonPaternity* may be mailed or hand-carried to different locations for signature and notarization. These documents must be then returned to either the hospital or the Clerk's office because they are a legal part of the birth certificate.

Additional recommendation:

As a general rule, documents prepared at a hospital facility should not be copied and given to parents. Occasionally parents request preliminary copies of Voluntary Acknowledgments, Affidavits and even the *Standard Certificate of Live Birth* prior to legal registration. Copies should not be given before all of the birth certificate documents are examined and accepted for legal registration by the Clerk. Past experience has shown that parents may misunderstand the legal status of the record if copies are given beforehand.



<sup>1</sup> Birth certificates for home births (no hospital intervention) are normally prepared at the City/Town Clerk's office.